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SUJETO MIGRANTE

EDITORA GENERAL

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Afropolitanism: a 'New' Wave Back to Africa? Female African Writers on Migration in the Global World

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Resumen

El hecho de si el “Afropolitanismo” es una tendencia duradera y un término apropiado que abarca a una joven generación de sujetos diaspóricos africanos que viven en ciudades de todo el mundo ha sido ampliamente discutido y no se ha llegado aún a ningún acuerdo. Como ocurre con otros términos que entrelazan política, sociedad y cultura, las opiniones e ideas sobre la noción de “Afropolitanismo” varían. Desde nuestro punto de vista, el “Afropolitanismo” no es más que una consecuencia o quizás otra vuelta de tuerca en la rueda de la historia. Si consideramos escritoras que pertenecen a la primera y segunda generación de autoras africanas, como Grace Ogot y Buchi Emecheta, y cómo representaron los fenómenos migratorios y las actitudes e ideas de las siguientes generaciones, y si las comparamos con autoras de la tercera generación, como Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, podemos establecer cómo las escritoras de las generaciones previas ya anticipaban la situación que se discute hoy en día y por tanto corroborar las deficiencias de dicho término.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Afropolitanismo, migración, Ogot, Emecheta, Adichie.

Abstract

Whether “Afropolitanism” is an appropriate term for a generation of African diasporic youth who lived in cities all over the world, has been thoroughly discussed and no agreement has yet been reached. Like other terms which intertwine politics, society and culture, opinions and ideas about the notion of “Afropolitanism” vary. From our perspective, “Afropolitanism” is nothing but a consequence or maybe another twist in the wheel of history. If we consider writers who belong to the first and second generation of female African authors, like Grace Ogot and Buchi Emecheta, and how they presented migratory phenomena and the attitudes and ideas of the following generations; and if we compare them to third generation authors, like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, we can establish how early writers were already foreseeing the situation we are discussing these days and therefore confirm the deficiencies of the term.

KEY WORDS: Afropolitanism, migration, Ogot, Emecheta, Adichie.

1. Introduction

Considering that space is a “liminal zone between past and future [...] constituted as an expression of existing power structures and simultaneously constituting the potential for challenging those structures” (Findlay 2006: i), we should reflect on the situation that the new generation of African migrants are confronting and how they identify themselves with the spaces they inhabit. When dealing with concepts such as

‘home’, ‘place’, ‘location–locality’, identity and sense of place [...] geographers [agree that] we are living through a period of immense spatial upheaval, that this is an era of a new and powerful globalization, of instantaneous worldwide communication, of the

break-up of what were once local coherencies, of a new and violent phase of 'time-space compression'. (Massey 1994: 157)

In her 2005 article «Bye-Bye Babar» Taiye Selasi introduced the term "Afropolitanism" to reflect the situation of Africans nowadays and reestablish new notions of "home" as a conglomerate of places that may differ for each member of this new generation. Thus, Selasi's definition of Afropolitans' "home"

is many things: where their parents are from; where they go for vacation; where they went to school; where they see old friends; where they live (or live this year). Like so many African young people working and living in cities around the globe, they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many. (Selasi 2005)

This varied interpretation of "home" is key to define what Selasi understands as "Afropolitan", "the multiple cultural affiliations of today's diasporic Africans, whom she described as 'the newest generation of African emigrants' who identify themselves as 'Africans of the world'" (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 3). However, whether Afropolitanism is a long-lasting tendency and an appropriate term which encompasses a young generation of African diasporic subjects who live in cities all around the world, has been thoroughly discussed and no agreement has been reached yet. Like other terms which intertwine politics, society and culture, opinions and ideas about the notion of Afropolitanism vary and therefore the term has met divided critical reaction. Some scholars, like Chielozona Eze, follow Selasi's interpretation highlighting the "inherent fluidity and cosmopolitanism of African identities" (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 3). Similarly, Achille Mbembe considers it a way "to revive African aesthetic and cultural creativity" (Mbembe 2007: 30). Rejecting the identification of the term with previous ones, like Pan-Africanism or "négritude", Mbembe considers Afropolitanism as

an aesthetic and a particular poetic of the world. It is a way of being in the world, refusing on principle any form of victim identity – which does not mean that it is not aware of the injustice and violence inflicted on the continent and its people by the law of the world. It is also a political and cultural stance in relation to the nation, to race and to the issue of difference in general. (Mbembe 2007: 28-29)

On the contrary, other voices, such as Binyavanga Wainaina (2012) and Emma Dabiri (2014), catalogue it as a product of and for the West. Yewande Omotoso even rejects the influence and mediation of the West in understanding Africa and Africans, as he considers there is no need "anybody translat[es] things for me [...], that is an acceptable human condition, to be exploring and learning" (Omotoso qtd in Fasselt 2015: 235). As a result of this rejection of the West, Wainaina, among others, offers an alternative, "to work toward reinvesting older familiar terms with new, flexible, more contemporary meanings" (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 3) rather than creating neologisms which are not free from being problematic. From my perspective, Afropolitanism is nothing but a consequence, or maybe another twist, in the wheel that history is and therefore coining this new term seems inefficient.

When reflecting upon the term "Afropolitanism", Omotoso highlights the publication within the same years of books such as "Adichie's *Americanah*, NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013), Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011), Selasi's *Ghana Must Go* and so on" claiming how significant it is that "they are all about identity, the traveller, the African living in the West" (Omotoso qtd in Fasselt 2015: 235) and hence establishing a relation between these new writers and the term under study.

This article provides an analysis of three generations of female African writers and how they represent the phenomenon of migration through their characters; which will help to study the development in the appearance of the term "Afropolitanism". The analysis reveals how the writers from the first and second generations, like Grace Ogot and Buchi Emecheta, presented the attitudes and ideas about the following generations through the children of their protagonists and other young characters. When these perspectives are compared to the characters in third generation authors' novels, like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's, the deficiencies of the

term become apparent. As earlier writers have already foreseen the Afropolitan situation new writers are discussing these days, it is claimed how the term “Afropolitanism” is not something new and therefore that it becomes inefficient.

2. *Migration in the global world*

Being usually considered a reflection of reality, literature, in this case African literature, reflects as well migratory factors. In order to understand the situation of new African diasporic subjects and the reasons for the migration of characters that the new generation of African writers present in their novels one should consider how the concept or the idea of the term “migration” has developed over the years, mainly influenced by history and the evolution of society. In this sense, the biggest change is the attitude of the exile to the host country and to their homeland, that is, the decision of whether remaining in the exile or returning home once their main goals have been achieved. One should reckon, hence, that

The flows of migration to the Western countries which took place after the Second World War, and especially from the 1960s onwards, differed from earlier migratory movements in that they were primarily intended to be temporary. In the wake of those immigrants who took their families and left their homeland to conquer a new world, the immigrants of the 1960s scarcely entertained the idea of settling in the host country on a permanent basis. (Thomas and Wihtol de Wenden 1985: 33)

The reasons for migrating to the West, which become apparent in the novels of the first and second generations of African writers, are mainly a combination of three factors: education and cultural freedom, the colonial/neocolonial discourse, and economy.

The educational and cultural factor combines two different situations. On the one hand, from the 1960s onwards, it was common to find many governments and institutions in Africa offering a few students grants to follow their studies in a Western country, with the idea of occupying government positions under their rule once they returned to Africa. This educational factor is particularly common to find in texts from the first and second generations, like Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Our Sister Killjoy or Reflections from a Black-Eyed Squint* (1977), where the main female character, after receiving a grant to study in Europe, experiences an internal and external journey that concludes with her return to Africa. On the other hand, for other students studying in a foreign country was a way of escaping from the political repression “that usually harass[ed] and intimidate[d] students, academics and union leaders”¹ (Adepoju 2000: 134). In this sense, many exiles, particularly the exiled writer, considered the West as a salvation land where “[w]hether seeking freedom from the small town in the metropolis or from the colonial province in the colonizer’s capital [...] [they could see themselves] as freed from the constraints at home and opened to a world of cultural expression and diversity” (Wilentz 1999: 163).

The second factor of migration was the colonial and/or neocolonial discourse. In this sense one should consider the influence of the colonial period in the image of the Western countries in the eyes of the colonized. This image, promoted by the imperialist discourse, provoked in many cases devotion towards the “mother country” and therefore, “through the idea of the city [they were] given the idea of superiority of race and culture” (Varma 2008). The consequences of this worth, beauty and welfare state of the Western countries, that were instilled in such an eloquent manner, was the yearning for the opportunity of travelling and living in the West one day, rejecting the idea of returning to Africa. These neo/colonial discourses are present in novels by both male and female writers of the first and second generations, such as *The Graduate* (1980), from the first-generation author Grace Ogot².

1 My translation, “regímenes dictatoriales [que] suelen acosar e intimidar a los estudiantes, los intelectuales y los líderes de los sindicatos, provocando así la emigración” (Adepoju 2000: 134).

2 This novel will be analysed in the following section.

The third factor that promoted African migration to Western countries was “[t]heir intention [...] to find better paid jobs, to put some money aside, and then go back and turn their savings to good account” (Thomas and Wihtol de Wenden 1985: 33). The aim for migrating was, in most cases, “motivated by the desire to improve the migrant’s economic status or the prospects of [their] children” (Richmond 1984: 522), as we will analyse in the second-generation author Buchi Emecheta’s novel *Kehinde* (1994). Moreover, it does not matter if the migrant leaves with their family or alone, because

Migration in Africa is still [...] a family issue, as [...] a family who follow a survival strategy will encourage one or several of its members to enter [...] the labour migration system, hoping that the migrant maintains contact with the family, either by visiting them or by sending money. (Adepoju 2000: 135)³

The presence of the family is especially relevant when the migrants are men, as “[t]he family also expects a reward for the investment in the education of its members, generally the first male son, who was raised looking to migration” (Adepoju 2000: 135). This becomes present in the works of authors who belong to the first generation of African writers, such as Grace Ogot’s *The Graduate* (1980) and Ama Ata Aidoo’s *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1964), where the whole family expects the *been-to*⁴ in this play, Ato, to pay the family back for the money and effort they invested in his education.

3. *Three generations of female african writers*

Female African writers are usually divided in three generations: a first generation who fought for a place in the arena where male writers such as Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola, J.P. Clark et al. were seen as the only possible representatives for African literature (here we include Flora Nwapa and Grace Ogot among others); a second generation who was raised during the political upheaval that preceded and persisted the independence of many African countries and who started publishing in the 1970s and 80s, achieving a level of visibility and critical attention unprecedented for female African writers (such as Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo and Sindiwe Magona); and a third generation who appeared with the new millennium to present the readers with the new realities of African countries (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, NoViolet Bulawayo, Teju Cole and Sefi Atta among others).

This article analyses one of the most representative authors of each generation: Grace Ogot, Buchi Emecheta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, paying attention to their representation of migration through different characters and their relation to the term “Afropolitanism”.

3.1. *Grace Ogot*

Grace Ogot (1930-2015), who belongs to the first generation of female African writers, published in 1980 a novel entitled *The Graduate*, in which Juanina, the main female character, as a Minister of Kenya, starts a journey all over Europe and the United States to convince the parents of nowadays so-called Afropolitans to return home and help to rebuild Kenya after its independence. In this novel, characters comply with the three migration factors: some have gone to study, some others to work abroad, but they all share the idea of returning once their aims are obtained. Nonetheless, the image the minister presents of these migrants as the best

³ My translation, “[...]a migración en África sigue siendo [...] un ‘asunto familiar’, puesto que [...] [u]na familia que adopte la estrategia de supervivencia se esforzará por alentar a uno o varios de sus miembros a entrar [...] en el sistema de migración laboral, esperando que el emigrante se mantenga en contacto con los miembros de la familia que haya dejado, mediante visitas y en particular transferencias de dinero. La familia espera también ser recompensada por su inversión en la educación de sus miembros, generalmente el primer varón, que ha sido criado con miras a dicha migración.” (Adepoju 2000: 135)

⁴ The ‘been-to’ is the person who has been to a foreign country and returned to their homeland – this term is normally used to address men.

of both worlds – image that coincides with the idea of Afropolitanism – ends up being the image of a whole generation influenced by neo/colonialism.

When describing nowadays situation, Selasi suggests that “[m]ost Afropolitans could serve Africa better in Africa” and explains how “a fair number of African professionals are returning; and there is consciousness among the ones who remain, an acute awareness among this brood of too-cool-for-schools that there’s work to be done” (Selasi 2005). However she also asks whether the return is possible “There are those among us who wonder to the point of weeping: where next, Africa? When will the scattered tribes return? When will the talent repatriate? What lifestyles await young professionals at home? How to invest in Africa’s future?” (Selasi 2005). To be fair, this situation of returning to Africa and the position of Africans and not the West as the driving force for change together with the questions Selasi poses are not new; they have already been asked by the previous generations, as one reads through the migrant and non-migrant characters in novels like Ogot’s *The Graduate*.

The renovated Africa the minister in Ogot’s novel is fighting for is relying on the return of the been-tos, who cannot but reject Africa and the idea of coming back and accuse African countries of abandoning them to the point that “African governments only paid lipservice to Africanisation, and [...] Africa had no faith in her own experts” (Ogot 1980: 20). When confronted with this atmosphere the minister makes a speech in which she describes Kenya as “[a] country that flows with milk and honey. A country whose beautiful landscape and wealth, the white man had stolen from our people” (Ogot 1980: 25). Her words not only seek the return of the exiles but they also present them as the only possible solution to “remove away the yoke of colonial domination from our shoulders [...] [and] challenge the white man, illegally sitting on your jobs” (Ogot 1980: 26).

Considering that Juanina’s words about the changes Kenya is experiencing can be honest, many exiled students and workers show their willingness to return to Kenya. Nonetheless, Ogot’s novel criticises how only one of them, Jakoyo, does finally return, what discloses once again the neo/colonial influence suffered by many exiles. Having lived seven years in the United States, Jakoyo’s expectations about Kenya’s change overwhelm him. Kenya differs from the country Jakoyo remembers, but it does not correspond to the positive image Juanina claimed either. Rather than waiting for the exiles to return, Kenyans attitude towards exiled students is controversial, to the point that this new version of the country resembles, in Jakoyo’s eyes, the old colonial Kenya he left behind:

‘You sure are a foreigner, if you think you can see a minister without a pass.’ [...] ‘He will soon be humble enough, don’t worry,’ they said in Kiswahili. ‘Too many Americans are coming here to snatch jobs from our boys and once they are in, they never want to get out’. (Ogot 1980: 45-6)

Ogot’s description of Kenya, as a country still suffering the colonial yoke, gains relevance through the character of Anabell. She is a young Kenyan secretary, described as a heroine, who seems to be the only character, apart from Juanina, that is willing to help Jakoyo. Interestingly, Anabell’s sense of duty, “[her] duty [...] to [her] President, [her] minister, and to [her] people” (Ogot 1980: 70), prevents her from realising she is the one who saves “one more Kenyan from humiliation and deprivation of his right!” (Ogot 1980: 70). In this novel Ogot makes use of female characters to present them as the saviours of the powerless Jakoyo. It is “Juanina and Anabell who command the action and determine [the] meaning [of the novel] [...] the role of national actor, is reserved for women” (Stratton 1994: 78). Without the guidance and help of these women, Ogot’s male character, representative of the first generation of migrants – the equivalent to those nowadays described as Afropolitans, would not have been able to uncover and break free from the ploy established to favour a British worker at the ministry. His knowledge of both societies does not help him in his return to Africa and he could have lost the job opportunity that made him return from the exile if not “for the sharp eye of Anabell” (Ogot

1980: 71). On the contrary, the young African generation of Anabell represents the fighting from the heart of Africa against the power still exerted by the West.

3.2. *Buchi Emecheta*

Buchi Emecheta (1944-2017) belongs to the second generation of female African writers. In 1994 Emecheta published her novel *Kehinde*, where she combines two different perspectives of migration that are not common to find at the time, that of the male migrant with that of the female migrant.

Some of the migrants present in Emecheta's novel, mainly male migrants, are victims of colonial and neocolonial ideologies, thus relating Western countries to the concepts of Paradise and the Promised Land. It is quite significant how these ideologies are highly influential and contribute to a standardisation in migrants' vision, not only of the exile but of their homelands as well. In this sense, Emecheta's novels are very much concerned with preventing these false ideas to expand, to the point that the author shares, both in novels⁵ and interviews, her own experiences of disappointment at her arrival to the United Kingdom:

The experience that had an impact on my writing as a woman is coming to Britain – the shock was tremendous. I was raised in a sort of missionary home where we had ideal young graduate English mistresses who came all the way from England to teach us – so the idea they gave us about England was quite different. So when I came through Liverpool, we came on a boat and it was a day like this, it was wet, but there was snow, it was in March, and I was so disappointed right from the word go. I can't put it into words what I was actually expecting but it wasn't what I got. And I'm still recovering almost 40 years on. (BBC 2007)

Kehinde describes a migration related to the third factor, family unification associated to the idea of returning to Africa once the married couple has worked and saved some money. Through this representation of a migrant family the novel deals with the evolution in the identity of the main female character, Kehinde, an African woman who lives happily integrated in London after twenty years. However, at some point in the novel her husband resumes the initial idea of returning to Nigeria, taking their children with him. Despite Kehinde accepts this return to their homeland, she does not feel the need to go back. In fact she feels somehow forced to stay in London to sell the house, earn some more money, and finally follow her family back to Africa, complying with her husband's desire.

From an Afropolitan perspective, what is quite significant about this novel is the fact that, although their children are reared in London following Nigerian traditions, the reaction and readjustment they suffer when returning to a country they do not know and they do not consider their own is distressing. Interestingly, Emecheta provides two different characters: the son and the daughter, highlighting the differences that can appear according to gender. In our analysis of Joshua and Bimpe we see that although both of them seem to adapt and acquire Nigerian traditions, only Joshua is negatively affected by the patriarchal attitude that surrounds him in Nigeria.

More importantly, when both of them return to the Afropolitan atmosphere of London, Joshua's attitude is no longer intermingled, but he seems to have forgotten his London experience in favour of the Nigerian one, trying to impose his will as a man on his mother. Quite the contrary, Bimpe re-establishes her place in London, but with a new African side that was previously unknown to her. Emecheta's description of these characters corresponds quite significantly to Mbembe's description of today's Afropolitans:

Today, many Africans live outside Africa. Others have decided of their own accord to live on the continent but not necessarily in their countries of birth. More so, many of them have had the opportunity to experience several worlds and, in fact, have not stopped

⁵ See Buchi Emecheta's novel *Second-Class Citizen* (1974), where a similar description is offered.

coming and going, developing an invaluable wealth of perception and sensitivity in the course of these movements. These are usually people who can express themselves in more than one language. They are developing, sometimes without their knowing it, a transnational culture which I call “Afropolitan” culture [...] Such ‘broad-mindedness’ is found more deeply still among a great number of artists, musicians and composers, writers, poets, painters – workers of the mind who have been aware since the beginning of the post-colonial era. (Mbembe 2007: 30)

Thus, in this novel, Emecheta is leading the way to the new generation that is these days discussing the bicultural, bilingual and transcontinental situation of Afropolitans. In fact, this definition of Afropolitan could even be applied to the main character of the novel, a middle-aged woman who is taking her own decisions for the first time in her life and who decides to return to London looking for “a place and a space for herself, independence, and escape from a too restrictive and constraining environment” (Pichler 2001: 204), but without rejecting her Nigerian past. Kehinde, the same as her daughter⁶, is able to combine her African and British sides and thinks about the possibility of returning to Nigeria once she retires, what highlights once again the inadequacy of coining a new term like Afropolitanism to describe nowadays characters when we can prove the previous existence of similar concepts, situations and characters in African fiction.

3.3. *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (1977-), direct inheritor of the first and second generation of female African writers, presents in her novels and short stories, such as *Americanah* (2013) and «The Thing Around Your Neck» (2009), characters who could also be described as Afropolitans.

Yogita Goyal collects how Adichie’s novel, “*Americanah*, navigates the spaces of Philadelphia, New Haven, Baltimore [...] Brooklyn [...] Lagos, Nsukka, London. Exploring how migration shapes racial identity” (Goyal 2014: xi). The same as Ogot presented characters who, as victims of neo/colonialism, carefully tried to erase any African characteristic in their personality, appearance and behaviour, Adichie confronts the reader with the difficulties migrants encounter, highlighting how migrants repeat with other new comers the same injustices they suffered. In this sense, the manager of the café in «The Thing Around Your Neck» “said he had never had a Nigerian employee but all immigrants worked hard. He knew, he’d been there. He’d pay you a dollar less, but under the table; he didn’t like all the taxes they were making him pay” (Adichie 2010: 117). On the other hand, Adichie also emphasises how migrants have to confront situations in the exile they did not expect, like the male character in *Americanah*, Obinze, who experiences the same calamities both during his exile and his return as Grace Ogot’s migrants, but more than thirty years later.

Adichie also includes characters that associate certain behaviours or preferences with the fact of living in the West. The idea of the United States as a paradise is also present in her books and stereotypes appear in both the American and the African communities. Hence, in «The Thing Around Your Neck», the United States is described by the main character’s African community as a place where “everybody [...] had a car and a gun” (Adichie 2010: 115) and where the female character would have a big car in a month and soon a big house. In the same way, Americans’ lack of information about Africa is addressed when they talk to an African and ask “where you learned to speak English and if you had real houses back in Africa and if you’d seen a car before you came to America [...] a mixture of ignorance and arrogance” (Adichie 2010: 116).

⁶ The novel suggests that Kehinde’s son will need to change and recover his British side and combine it with his newly acquired Nigerian one if he wants a fruitful relation with his girlfriend, sister and mother.

The situation of the families who stay in Africa does not evolve from the earlier novels either. The same as Ogot and Emecheta, Adichie emphasises the harshness of living in Africa, presenting the difficulties of her family and community, clearly related to the still existing third factor of migration in which a member of the family is sent to the exile to provide for the rest:

your aunts who hawked dried fish and plantains, cajoling customers to buy and then shouting insults when they didn't, your uncles who drank local gin and crammed their families and lives into single rooms [...] your father who brought back his boss's old newspapers from work and made your brothers read them; your mother whose salary was barely enough to pay your brothers' school fees at the secondary school where teachers gave an A when someone slipped them a brown envelope. (Adichie 2010: 117-118)

Furthermore, in the short story «The Thing Around Your Neck», Adichie also opens the dialogue of the criticism suffered by people in interracial relationships. Interestingly enough, in this Afropolitan atmosphere that some critics describe, the African protagonist and her white American boyfriend are criticised by both communities: “You knew by people's reaction that you two were abnormal – the way the nasty ones were too nasty and the nice ones too nice” (Adichie 2010: 125). In this way, Adichie's works unmask the idiosyncrasies and hypocrisies of the United States “and, above all, their insistence that race doesn't matter” (Goyal 2014: xii).

For Goyal, the novel *Americanah* “also challenges the conventions of the typical immigrant novel, where no alternative to life in America is entertained, as Ifemelu chooses to return home not under any kind of compulsion, but just because she wants to be in Lagos” (Goyal 2014: xii). Quite significantly, Ifemelu, once she is back in Nigeria, “comes to long for the health food cherished by her African American quinoa-eating ex-boyfriend as much as for the boiled yams and fried plantains of her Nigerian home, though not without some disquiet at this transformation” (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 3). For Tunca and Ledent this episode has lead critics to interpret how Ifemelu's “diasporic experience has altered her relationship with her country of origin. [...] Ifemelu's world, they insist, is the globalized culture of the twenty-first century [...] Adichie's is the age of the “Afropolitan.”” (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 3). However, critics should also consider the fact that Adichie herself claims “I'm not an Afropolitan. I'm African, happily so [...] I'm comfortable in the world, and it's not that unusual. Many Africans are happily African and don't think they need a new term” (Barber 2013).

4. Conclusion

The writers who belong to this third generation, these so-called Afropolitans – whether they like it or not – Adichie, Bulawayo, Cole, Selasi..., have become a resourceful material for critics to develop and base their arguments on when dealing with Afropolitanism. In the case of Adichie's novel *Americanah*, it

has garnered an impressive amount of critical attention [above all in relation to] the impact of globalization on societies around the world, and relations between black people of different cultural backgrounds in the US. It is rather striking, however, that comparatively little attention has been devoted to the critique of *Nigerian* society that also forms the backbone of the book. (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 4)

Despite one cannot decide if this lack of attention is due to a lack of conformity of Adichie's critique with the given notion of Afropolitanism, it is undeniable that important topics such as “power cuts, institutionalized corruption, unemployment issues, Christian fundamentalism,” among others, are left aside by the critics of Adichie's novel “in favor of more fashionable global or Western-oriented counterparts” (Tunca and Ledent 2015: 4).

Through the analysis of the three generations of female African writers it has become clear that from the first generation onwards there has been an evolution in the attitudes and ideas of some African people living in the West: from those who are victims of neo/colonialism and consider Africa clung to the past, to those who adopt African customs and reject any in-

fluence from the West, to those who are supposed to embody the best of both worlds and who try to present a renovated and modern idea of African societies. At the same time, the societies from the first and second generation and the societies described by authors like Adichie have a common pattern, the existence in the novels of characters that could match the description of nowadays Afropolitans.

All considered, the term Afropolitanism does not seem to fulfil the social critique of Adichie's novels or to be able to explain the existence of these previous characters who seem to share characteristics with nowadays Afropolitans. This leads us to reinforce the deficiencies of this newly coined term and resume Omotoso's idea that "The term Afropolitan only seems useful for the West as it gives the West an opportunity to understand and even 'consume' Africa" (Omotoso qtd in Fasselt 2015: 235).

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